

Message Text

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22

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06

OMB-01 SAM-01 SSM-03 EB-07 AID-05 /087 W

----- 095131

P R 111004Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8777

INFO AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY MANAMA

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

S E C R E T AMMAN 4169

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PFOR, JO, SA, KU, BA, UM, XF

SUBJECT: TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN - GULF AND SAUDI VISIT

1. SUMMARY: KING BRIEFED ME AUGUST 10 ON HIS THREE DAY VISIT TO GULF AND SAUDI ARABIA. KING FOUND SAUDIS RELAXED AND RECEPTIVE. HE DID NOT INDICATE AIR DEFENSE QUESTION AROSE EXCEPT TO SAY SAUDIS STILL SEEMED POSITIVE AND WERE WORKING WITH US. KUWAIT RECEPTION WAS BETTER THAN IN PAST WITH NO ARGUMENTS. BAHREIN HE FOUND INCREASINGLY ALERT TO INTERNAL SECURITY ISSUES POSED BY IRAQIS AND LEFT AND CROWN PRINCE SEEMS TO HAVE RESOLVED FAMILY FIGHT OVER FUNDS FOR DEFENSE. IN OMAN QABOOS IS DISTRUBED BY SLOW SAUDI ASSISTANCE FOR CIVIL WORKS PROJECTS IN KHOFAR, BUT ASSURED BY FAILURE OF REBELS TO REBUILD MILITARY STRENGTH AND APPARENT DIVISIONS IN SOUTH YEMEN. END SUMMARY.

2. IN SAUDI ARABIA, KING SAID ATMOSPHERE CONTINUES TO BE GOOD FOLLOWING HIS LAST VISIT ON JULY 4 AND 5. SAUDIS APPEARED TO BE GOOD MORE UNDERSTANDING OF SYRIA'S PROBLEM IN LEBANON

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AND THE NEED TO AVOID A SITUATION WHICH WOULD LEAD TO ASAD'S

DISAPPEARANCE FROM THE SYRIAN SCENE. KING SAID HE HAD RAISED QUESTION OF FY 1976 \$82.5M FMS CREDIT GUARANTEE WITH THE SAUDIS. SAUDIS SEEMED TO BE MYSTIFIED ABOUT WHAT WAS INVOLVED, BUT KING SAID WHEN HE EXPLAINED THAT IT WAS SPREAD OUT OVER MANY YEARS AND THAT JORDAN WOULD PAY THE INTEREST, THEY WERE MORE UNDERSTANDING. HE DID NOT INDICATE MATTER HAD BEEN FULLY RESOLVED. HE SAID THAT HE TRIED TO AVOID PRESSING SAUDIS BUT HAD EXPLAINED TO THEM IN SOME DETAIL JORDAN'S CURRENT BUDGET PROBLEMS. HE ASKED SAUDIS TO HELP WITH KUWAIT WHICH HAD TAKEN POSITION, AS HAD OTHER GULF STATES, THAT IF SAUDIS WERE NOT GOING TO MAKE RABAT PAYMENTS TO CONFRONTATION STATES, THAN CERTAINLY THEY (THE GULF STATES) WERE NOT BOUND TO DO SO EITHER. SAUDIS SAID THEY WOULD TALK WITH KUWAIT AND PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZE THAT SAUDI ARABIA WAS PROVIDING HELP TO JORDAN WAY BEYOND RABAT COMMITMENT IN TERMS OF AIR DEFENSE AND OTHER ASSISTANCE.

3. KING SAYS THAT HE IS NOW CONVINCED HE MADE A SERIOUS MISTAKE IN NOT SEEING SAUDIS OFTEN ENOUGH OR IN KEEPING THEM INFORMED ABOUT WHAT WAS HAPPENING. HE INTENDS TO TRY TO SEE KHALID AND THE FAMILY" (KHALID IS NOW KNOWN LIGHTEARTEDLY AMONG THE JORDANIANS AS "THE BOSS") AT LEAST ONCE A MONTH. KING SAID HE ALSO PUT IN A WORD WITH KHALID FOR MORE FINANCIAL HELP FOR THE SYRIANS AND HAD EXPRESSED SYRIAN APPRECIATION FOR THE \$200M WHICH HAD ALREADY BEEN PASSED TO ASAD.

4. KING THEN NOTED THAT HE TOLD SAUDIS THAT SYRIANS WERE QUITE HURT BY SAUDI DECISION TO REMOVE SAUDI BRIGADE FROM SYRIA. AT SYRIAN REQUEST, KING SAID HE TOLD SAUDIS THAT IF THEY WERE ABOUT LEFTIST INFLUENCE AMONG SAUDI FORCES THEY SHOULD GET THEIR BATTALION OUT OF LEBANON. SAUDI REJOINER WAS THAT THEY WANTED THEIR TROOPS IN LEBANON IN THE FIRST PLACE. KING SAYS HE IS NOT CONCERNED ABOUT WITHDRAWAL OF SAUDI BRIGADE FROM JORDAN. HE WILL REPLACE IT WITH A SPECIAL FORCES BATTALION, BUT WILL, IN HIS REQUESTS TO THE SAUDIS FOR FINANCIAL HELP, MAKE VERY SURE SAUDIS UNDERSTAND WHAT A "BIG HOLE" THEIR ACTION LEAVES IN HIS ECONOMY AND DEFENSE.

5. KING REPORTED THAT SAUDIS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT PRESENT DIVISION IN ARAB WORLD BETWEEN EGYPT AND SYRIA AND THAT HE
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ENCOURAGED SAUDIS TO THINK FURTHER ABOUT AND WORK TOWARD HOLDING A SUMMIT OF CONFRONTATION STATES AS A WAY OF GETTING THE LEADERS TOGETHER. KING STRESSED THIS SHOULD BE WITHOUT PRECONDITIONS. (KING'S STRESS ON CONFRONTATION STATES ATTENDING THE MEETING MAKES CLEAR THAT HE TOO WOULD LIKE TO BE PRESENT).

6. IN KUWAIT, KING REMARKED THAT ATMOSPHERE HAD BEEN EXCELLENT. HE CONTRASTED THIS TO ACrimonious ARGUMENTS WHICH USED TO TAKE

PLACE FURING PAST VISITS OVER IN PARTICULAR PALESTINIAN ISSUES. KING HAD WARNED KUWAITIS ABOUT PROBLEMS WHICH WOULD BE CREATED FOR KUWAIT IF SYRIANS SHOULD BECOME PART OF A "RADICAL CRESCENT" WITH IRAQ AS A RESULT OF FAILURE BY ASAD IN LEBANON. THE PROBLEM MIGHT THEN DEVELOP FOR KUWAIT BY AN OUTBREAK OF DISPUTES BETWEEN PALESTINAIN GROUPS ENGINEERED BY IRAQIS, WITH IRAQIS LATER MOVING IN "TO KEEP ORDER", BUT IN EFFECT TO DOMINATE KUWAIT. KING SAID KUWAIT NOW SEEMED GENUINELY CONCERNED THAT KUWAIT MIGHT BECOME THE NEXT COCKPIT (AFTER LEBANON) OF INCREASING PALESTINIAN PRESSURE ON THE LOCAL ARAB LEADERSHIP. KING SAID HE TALKED WITH KUWAITIS ABOUT MONEY, BUT DID NOT EXPECT AND DID NOT GET MUCH OF A RESPONSE FROM THEM.

4. ON BAHREIN, KING SAID HE ALSO SET OUT HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE LEBANESE SITUATION - VERY SUPPORTIVE OF SYRIA AND ASAD- AND SPOKE RATHER FRANKLY ABOUT THE SECURITY SITUATION AND THE "IRAQI MENACE." KING REMARKED THAT KUWAITIS HAD SAID THAT BAHREINIS WERE STILL CONFUSED BEING ABLE TO SUPPORT NEITHER THE RIGHT NOR THE LEFT IN BAHREIN. KING SAID HE WAS HOWEVER SOMEWHAT MORE ENCOURAGED BY DEVELOPMENTS IN BAHREIN. THE BAHREINS SEEMED TO BE DOING WELL ECONOMICALLY. THE FAMILY FEUD OVER DEFENSE ISSUES BETWEEN SHEIKH HAMID, WHOSE CONSIMING INTEREST KING SAID IS THE DEFENSE FORCE, AND RULER IS PATCHED UP. APPARENTLY, PROMISED SUADI DEFENSE SUBSIDIES FOR DEFENSE HAVE NOT ARRIVED OR ARE SLOW IN COMING AND THIS HAS UPSET HAMID, WHO ON THE STRENGTH OF SAUDI PROMISES, HAD HIS DEFENSE FORCE, ACCORDING TO KING, CUT OUT OF MOST OF THE LOCAL BUDGET APPROPRIATIONS.

8 KING SAW SULTAN QABOOS IN SALLALAH. HE SAID QABOOS IS PLEASED BY THE CONTINUING LACK OF INSURGENCY IN DHOFAR. HE CLAIMS THERE ARE LESS THAN 40 REBELS AND THAT SOME OF THESE ARE CRIMINALS AND BANDITS EVADING JUSTICE. ON THE OTHER HAND QABOOS IN
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DISAPPOINTED BY WITHDRAWAL OF WHAT HE TOOK TO BE A PROMISED SAUDI SUBSIDY FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT ON DHOFAR. KING SAID QABOOS SEEMS TO BE SOLD ON THE NEED TO PROVIDE FURTHER ECONOMIC PROGRESS IN KHOFAR AS THE NEXT STEP IN ENSURING HIS CONTINUING CONTROL OF THE AREA, AND IS DOING SO SLOWLY WITH OMANI FUNDS. QABOOS SEEMS PLEASED BY WHAT HE SAYS ARE GROWING SPLITS IN SOUTH YEMEN, BUT UNHAPPY BY COMPLAINTS HE HAS RECEIVED FROM HAMDI IN NORTH YEMEN AGAIN OF SLOWNESS IN SAUDI FINANCIAL SUPPORT.
PICKERING

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: CHIEF OF STATE VISITS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, TRAVEL REPORTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: ElyME
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976AMMAN04169
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760310-0184
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760866/aaaacfob.tel
Line Count: 164
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: ElyME
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2004 by greeneet>; APPROVED <08 OCT 2004 by ElyME>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TALK WITH KING HUSSEIN - GULF AND SAUDI VISIT
TAGS: PFOR, JO, SA, KU, BA, MU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006